

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 400

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AFM COORDINATING COMMISSION DISCUSSED CURRENT
SITUATION

SUMMARY: THE COORDINATING COMMISSION OF THE AFM INVITED THE
DIPLOMATICALLY ACCREDITED MILITARY COMMUNITY TO A BRIEFING
OSTENSIBLY TO INFORM THEM OF THE "TRUE" SITUATION WHICH
OBTAINS IN PORTUGAL UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMED FORCES
MOVEMENT (AFM). THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD AND SUBSEQUENT
CONVERSATIONS REVEALED THE EXTENT OF FRUSTRATION AND THE
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DIVERSITY IN VIEWS HELD BY MEMBERS OF THE AFM AND THE ARMED

FORCES IN GENERAL OVER THE MEANS BEING TAKEN TO ACCOMPLISH
THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AFM PROGRAM TO DEMOCRATIZE PORTUGAL.
END SUMMARY

FOLLOWING REPORT PREPARED BY OFFICE OF DEFENSE ATTACHE AND
COORDINATED WITH OTHER EMBASSY SECTIONS.

1. THIS IS A REPORT OF THE COORDINATING COMMISSION (CC)
BRIEFING ON 21 JAN 75 AT THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE
PRESENT: A. THE 7 MEMBERS OF THE CC ON COUNCIL OF STATE:
LT COL MANUEL RIBEIRO FRANCO CHARAIS)
CAPT DURATE SARAIVA MARQUES PINTO SOARES)
CAPT VASCO CORREIA LOURENCO) ARMY
MAJ JOSE CANTO E CASTRO)
CAPT JOSE PEREIRA PINTO) AF
CMDTE CARLOS CONTREIRAS)
LT MIGUEL JUDAS) NAVY
B. MEMBERS OF ATTACHE GROUP
C. MEMBERS OF IBERLANT
D. MEMBERS OF MAAG
E. INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS FROM PORTUGUESE
DEFENSE AND SERVICES
F. 5TH DIV, EMGFA

2. AGENDA:
A. SHORT PRESENTATION BY LTC CHARAIS ON PURPOSE OF
MEETING- 8 MIN.
B. QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE AND RESPONSES - 35 MIN.
C. CONVIVIO- 40 MIN.

3. GENERAL COMMENTS:

A. THIS GROUP OF SEVEN OFFICERS WHO REPRESENT THE AFM
IN THE COUNCIL OF STATE ARE ONLY A PART OF A LARGER CO-
ORDINATING COMMISSION. IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THEY AS A
GROUP ARE COMMITTED TO INSTALLATION OF A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
"A LA PORTUGUESA" IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.
B. INDIVIDUALLY THEY APPEAR TO VARY IN PERSONALITIES,
FROM STABLE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE (LTC CHARAIS) TO FANATIC AND
SHALLOW (LT JUDAS). IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WITHIN THIS GROUP
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OF SEVEN THERE ARE BOUND TO BE EXTREMES IN INTERPRETATION OF
THE PROGRAM.

C. IN HIS OPENING COMMENTS, LTC CHARAIS POINTED OUT THE
FACT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, AND THE PRESS OF OUR
RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, WERE NOT REFLECTING THE TRUE SITUATION
HERE IN PORTUGAL. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO PROVIDE
MILITARY MEMBERS OF THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN
LISBON THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE COORDINATING COMMISSION

AND TO ASK QUESTIONS WHOSE ANSWERS WOULD ASSIST US IN UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECTIVES OF THEIR PROGRAM. CHARAIS' BRIEF INTRODUCTION REPEATED THE WELL-KNOWN ORIGIN OF THE 25 APRIL COUP AND THE VOW THAT THE AFM INTENDS TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

4. SUBJECTS COVERED IN QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:

(A) SEVERAL QUESTIONS DEALT WITH DISCIPLINE, OR LACK OF IT, DEFINITION OF COMMAND AND THE GENERAL MILITARY AGREEMENT THAT A COMMANDER NEEDS TO HAVE "ACEITACAO" OF HIS TROOPS OR CREW. THESE QUESTIONS WERE FIELDED IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES. MAJOR CANTO E CASTRO SAID IT WAS BASED ON PORTUGUESE INTERPRETATION OF COMMAND AND COMMANDER -WHICH IS THAT THE COMMANDER DOESN'T SIMPLY "ORDER" HIS PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING-HE CLARIFIES THROUGH OPEN DISCUSSION THE RATIONALE FOR HIS "REQUEST" FOR AN ACTION. THESE OPEN DISCUSSIONS EVEN INCLUDE THE VOICE OF THE SERGEANTS THROUGH THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNCILS.

(B) TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEM AT THE INFANTRY SCHOOL IN MAFRA," TWO OF THE ARMY OFFICERS RESPONDED SAYING THAT CC DID NOT TAKE PART IN DECISIONS REGARDING 400 CADETS AT INFANTRY SCHOOL, EXPELLED BECAUSE THEY TOOK PART IN A POLITICAL DISCUSSION AND RALLY (SEE LISBON DAO IR 6-879-0339-74). HOWEVER, THESE CADETS HAVE NOT YET REPORTED IN AS PART OF THE GENERAL CONTINGENT, A DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECIDED ON BY THE ARMY STAFF. IT WAS STATED THAT THE INVESTIGATION IS CONTINUING. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT IN THE QUESTIONING IT WAS EVIDENT TO ALL THAT THE AUDIENCE WAS TIPTOEING AROUND THE REAL ISSUES AND LTC CHARAIS GAVE AN EXPOSITION ON THE ALLEGATION IN THE PRESS THAT THE AFM WAS LEADING PORTUGAL TOWARDS COMMUNISM. CONFIDENTIAL

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(C) HE RESPONDED TO THE IMPLIED QUESTION BY SAYING: "WE ARE NOT COMMUNISTS." IF WE HAD WANTED TO INSTALL A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT ON 25 APRIL WE COULD HAVE DONE SO. UNFORTUNATELY OUR PROGRAM COINCIDES IN SOME RESPECTS WITH THAT OF SOME MOVEMENTS AND PARTIES IN PORTUGAL AND THEY ARE EXPLOITING THESE SIMILARITIES TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. WE INITIATED THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT BY OUR ACTIONS ON 25 APRIL AND THE INSTALLATION OF THE JUNTA OF NATIONAL SALVATION. UNFORTUNATELY THE JUNTA WAS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT BY THEMSELVES AND THE VENTS OF 28 SEPT PROVED THAT WE HAD TO OVERSEE THE PROGRAM WITH A LEGISLATIVE BODY IN THE COUNCIL OF 20 AND AN OPERATIONAL ELEMENT CALLED COPCON.

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(D) IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT "THE LEGALITY OF
RETROACTIVE REVOLUTIONARY LAWS," CHARAIS RESPONDED THAT THE
AFM AGREED WITH GEN FABIAO'S COMMENTS OF LAST WEEK. FABIAO
SAID THAT IT ISN'T POSSIBLE TO HAVE A REVOLUTION WITHOUT
REVOLUTIONARY LAWS WHICH DEFEND IT. THE LAWS CREATED BY THE
FORMER FASCIST GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY DIDN'T PERMIT PUNISHMENT
OF WHAT ARE NOW CONSIDERED CRIMES PERPETRATED UNDER THE
PREVIOUS REGIMES. THE AFM CONSIDERS IT IMPERATIVE TO
COMPLETELY EXPOSE AND PUNISH ALL THOSE GUILTY OF CRIMES
COMMITTED UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE ODOUS DICTATORSHIP.
CHARAIS ALSO STATED THAT WHEN A CONSTITUTION REQUIRES CHANGES
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BECAUSE OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, AMENDMENTS ARE MADE. THIS IS TRUE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS ALSO. THESE CHANGES HOWEVER WILL BE A REFLECTION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE REVOLUTION.

(E) THE QUESTION WAS ASKED: "WHAT IS THE AFM RATIONALE FOR CREATING BY SUPPORT OF "UNICIDADE" A POTENTIAL LEFTIST DICTATORSHIP AFTER HAVING WORKED SO HARD TO DESTROY A RIGHTIST DICTATORSHIPS? BOTH CHARAIS AND CAPT LOURENCO RESPONDED AT SOME LENGTH TO SAY AFM IS DEDICATED TO THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJOIRTY AND ESPECIALY THOSE CLASSES WHO HAVE IN THE PAST BEEN DISFAVORED. "UNICIDADE" IS THE WILL OF THE 3.5 MILLION PORTUGUESE WORKERS AND IS THEREFORE SUPPORTED BY THE AFM. HOWEVER, THERE NEED BE NO CONCERN THAT THIS WILL RESULT IN A COMMUNIST LABOR HIERARCHY IN GOVERNMENT SINCE THE LAW PROVIDES FOR ONLY THE OVERALL DIRECTION OF INTER-SINDICAL. ALL ELECTIONS OF UNION OFFICERS WILL BE DEMOCRATIC AT THE BASIC UNION LEVEL AND SO ON UP THRU THE TOP ECHELON OF INTERSINDICAL. THEREFORE IT WILL BE (BY DEFINITION) A DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION.

5. PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN DAO REPRESENTATIVES AND PORTUGUESE OFFICERS AT THE "CONVIVIO" AFTER THE PRESENTATION RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

(A) CHIEF OF 2ND SECTION ARMY SAID: (1) THE PROBLEM OF PORTUGAL IS UNBELIEVABLY COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT OF DECOLONIZATION ON ALL DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE METROPOLE AND THE FRIGHTENING LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN BOTH THE ECONOMIC ARENA AND IN GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS. THE REASON THE AFM SUPPORTED "UNICIDADE" IS BECAUSE THEY FEARED THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT CALL A GENERAL STRIKE IF THEY DIDN'T. MANY OTHER ARMY OFFICERS ARE REALLY CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING BOTH IN THE ARMED FORCES AND ON THE NATIONAL SCENE BECAUSE OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PROGRAM BY THESE UPSTARTS WHO ARE TOTALLY UNQUALIFIED TO TREAT THE SCOPE OF PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION. HE WAS UNIMPRESSED WITH THE PRESENTATION OF THE CC AND TREATMENT OF THE QUESTIONS RAISED.

(B) LTC CHARAIS, CHIEF OF THE COORDINATING COMMISSION SAID:

(1) THERE IS NO CONFUSION IN THE AFM DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF COUNCILS. SINCE THE DECISIONS ARE ALL MADE IN THE

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COUNCIL OF 20 THERE IS OVERALL REPRESENTATION OF THE MILITARY AND THE AFM.

(2) HE AGREED WITH SOME MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMISSION WHO SAID THEY WERE AWARE OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY BUT WERE CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS NOT A DANGER OF A COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER IN PORTUGAL. OTHER MEMBERS SAID THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE NEWS MEDIA AND INFILTRATION OF THE ARMED FORCES WERE BEING MADE BY THE PCP AND THAT ONLY NOW WAS THE DEGREE OF THEIR EFFORTS BEING APPRECIATED AS A CONCERTED MOVE.

(C) CAPT LOURENCO TOLD THE DATT THAT IT IS THE CAPITALISTIC COUNTRIES THAT ARE DRIVING PORTUGAL TOWARDS COMMUNISM BY THEIR FAILURE TO INVEST. HE REASONS THAT THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN PORTUGAL IS NO MORE DANGEROUS THAN THAT IN U.K., FRANCE, OR ITALY WHERE ONE IS NEVER SURE THAT A LABOR GOVERNMENT WON'T WIN AND NATIONALIZE INDUSTRY. (COMMENT: THIS REMARK IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NAIVETE OF THE GROUP CONCERNING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MATTERS.)

(D) ROBIN ANDRADE, CHIEF OF 5TH DIV EMGFA ADMITTED THAT IN SPITE OF APPARENT CONSOLIDATION OF AFM WITHIN THE MILITARY THERE STILL EXISTS AT MOST ECHELONS AN AFM REPRESENTATIVE OR COUNCIL WHO HAD INDEPENDENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE AFM.

(E) BRIG GOMES CARDOSO, CHIEF OF 2 ND DIV EMGFA SAID THAT THE RUMOR ABOUT A POSSIBLE COMMUNIST COUP ON 14 JAN 75 WAS DEFINITELY A PCP PROPAGANDA MOVE AND WAS NOT BACKED UP BY ANY SPECIFIC PLANS.

(F) CAPT. BARBAROS PEREIRA, AFM MEMBER, SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIVERSE VIEWS OF THE DIFFERENT UNIONS WE CANNOT ENVISAGE THE FOUNDATION OF A SINGLE CENTRAL COUNCIL AS A VOICE FOR ALL UNIONS ALTHOUGH THIS COULD BE POSSIBLE UNDER "UNICIDADE." AT THIS TIME THE WORKERS DO NOT HAVE A SENSE OF DIRECTION OR UNITY. IT IS IMPORTANT IF THE PROGRAM OF ESTABLISHING A DEMOCRACY IS TO BE REALIZED THAT THE AFM HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE WORKERS. SINCE AN AFM POLL SHOWED AN OVERWHELMING SUPPORT BY THE WORKERS FOR "UNICIDADE," WE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GAIN THEIR SUPPORT BY ENDORSING THE CONCEPT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE UNIONS WOULD FORM A CENTRAL GROUP AND USE THE POWER TO SPEAK FOR THE WORKERS AS YOU
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MENTIONED, AND IF SUCH AN IMBALANCE WERE TO TAKE PLACE WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE ANOTHER APRIL 25 IN ORDER TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY.

(G) IN LATER CONVERSATION WITH CHARAIS, THE ARMA TOLD HIM THAT THE APPREHENSIONS OF ALL WESTERN NATIONS COULD BE BOILED TO A SINGLE POINT-CONCERN THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL TAKE OVER PORTUGAL BY WHATEVER MEANS AND THUS PENETRATE WESTERN EUROPE AND CREATE A SERIOUS SECURITY PROBLEM.

CHARAIS'S RESPONSE WAS THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN AS THE AFM IS NOT ABOUT TO ACCEPT A MINORITY REPRESENTATION. CHARAIS ENDED HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE STATEMENT THAT "THE FORMULA HAS NOT YET BEEN FOUND TO IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY."

6. COMMENT: IN THIS THE FIRST FORMAL PRESENTATION BY THE COORDINATING COMMISSION OF THE AFM TO THEIR PEERS FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICER COMMUNITY, SEVERAL PREVIOUSLY SUSPECTED DEFICIENCIES OF THE AFM WERE CRYSTALIZED AND REVEALED THAT:
(A) THE AFM IS SURFEITED WITH THEORIES AND HYPOTHOSES BUT LACK SPECIFIC PLANS OR PROGRAMS.

(B) THE AFM IS TRYING TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN POWER CENTERS TO ATTAIN THEIR PRINCIPAL GOAL OF HOLDING THE ELECTIONS AS SCHEDULED.

(C) BOTH WITHIN THE AFM ITSELF AND THE ARMED FORCES AS A WHOLE THERE IS AN EVER WIDENING RIFT OVER THE APPROPRIATE VEHICLE FOR INTRODUCING DEMOCRACY INTO PORTUGAL. THERE IS INCREASING CONCERN THAT THE ENORMOUS UNDERTAKING OF EDUCATING THE POPULACE AND IMPLEMENTING THE AIMS OF THE AFM PROGRAM CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENT.

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